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ABSTRACT

This document traces Australian training and literacy policy developments from 1974 to 1998. The document begins with a brief discussion of the global political, educational, social, and economic trends that have affected Australia's training and literacy policies. Discussed next are major events of the four policy "epochs" in Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector: the "poor cousin" epoch (1900-1974), during which technical and further education (TAFE) emerged as a "poor cousin" to Australia's school and higher education sector; the Kangan era (1974-1988), which was marked by emphasis on participation and equity; the epoch of the Open Training Market and seamless web (1988-1992); and the epoch of User Choice (1992-1998). The decade of reform in English language and literacy provision that began in the mid-1980s and included development of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy in 1991 is chronicled. Special attention is paid to the National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence and the National Reporting System (NRS). The effects of policy reforms in vocational and adult education on the dimensions of teachers work are considered. Concluding the document is a timeline of significant policy sources in vocational education and their relationship with literacy policy. (Contains 18 references.) (MN)

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FROM THE BILLABONG TO THE MAINSTREAM?

A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN TRAINING & LITERACY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS 1974-1998.

Peter Kell
Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies
James Cook University, Townsville, Australia

ADULT LITERACY RESEARCH NETWORK

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A teachers' guide to Australian training & literacy policy developments 1974-1998

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All enquiries in relation to this publication should be addressed to:
Publications and Clearinghouse Manager
Language Australia
GPO Box 372F
Melbourne VIC 3001

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Introduction: Global tendencies influencing policy changes

In the period 1974 to 1998 the Vocational Education and Training sector has been subject to far reaching and profound reforms that have moved this sector from the periphery to the centre of education policy. In a tandem development, adult literacy has almost identically shadowed the transformation experienced in the VET sector. The ten years of accelerated reform to 1998 in both VET and adult literacy provision have been characterised by significant integration with the restructuring of Australian industry and workplaces.

Both VET and language and literacy can no longer be considered the 'poor cousins' to the school and higher education sector but as important elements of the Australian education and training system.

This transformation can be attributed to a range of tendencies within the political, educational, social and economic spheres. The tendencies are:

- The tendency towards global capitalism. Global capitalism is characterised by the development of integrated world market structures where national barriers are meaningless. In the context of this globalisation, products, services and goods are developed, manufactured and distributed within a worldwide market. Global capitalism places the organisation of our economic and working life on fast forward with traditional notions of stability and flexibility being constantly challenged. The organisation of work and corporate life is in a constant process of reorganisation and readjustment. It is a symptom of an environment where capital and production are highly mobile and migratory, seeking out the most profitable and strategic options and locations. At the same time the traditional boundaries of knowledge are also disappearing, as globalised production and telecommunications industries merge the sciences of production, design, process and technology with the arts of language, culture, communication. The Information Superhighway has also shifted not

only the traditional 'maps' of knowledge, but also their locations. Knowledge is no longer institutionalised by endorsed providers in static locations as there are increasing opportunities for 'do it your-self learning'.

- The tendency towards new literacies arising from the new technologies of global communication and computer technology. Technologies of communication have dramatically reshaped the forms of communication and role of literacy. Computer technology and global media have reshaped the way in which social and workplace communications are now conducted. In this context literacy is no longer just reading text in books but interpreting and negotiating multimodal forms of communication which involve combinations of text, iconographics, graphics and spatial relations. New literacies are emerging from the communications revolution where laser, fibre optic, digital imaging, satellite technology, multimedia and 'virtual reality' combine into powerful electronic communication menus. The ability to apply and utilise these new forms of information technology is crucial for the 'new jobs'.

- The tendency towards a polarisation of work opportunities. The character of the workforce has experienced dramatic change with an increasing amount of mobility arising from the casualisation of work opportunities. While there has been moderate increase in the 'new jobs' associated with information technology, the greatest job growth has been in the service industries typified by casualised part time employment. There is a growing service oriented workforce which is highly mobile and needs constant reskilling and retraining in preparation for the next wave of jobs. In this context the concept of 'lifelong learning' is important for this highly mobile workforce.

- Tendency towards industry restructuring and skills formation. In the mid 1980s Australian manufacturing and industry were starkly identified as being uncompetitive within the context of a globalised economy. Paul Keating, the then Federal Treasurer shocked the nation by announcing that Australia would be a 'Banana Republic' unless urgent action to restructure the economy were taken. As part of the microeconomic reforms to make Australian industry more competitive, both the skills and skills levels of workers and the organisation of their work in Australian enterprises have been subject

to considerable reform. A cluster of unions, business and government argued that industrial work practices needed to be less hierarchical and confrontational and feature more collaborative workplace relations. The VET system, seen as under-performing, was identified as needing reform to lift skills levels to world standards. Similarly literacy was assigned an important role for equipping workers with the communications strategies for the new collaborative workplaces.

- The tendency towards reducing the size and scope of state funded activities and the tendency towards privatisation. Since the 1970s there has been bipartisan political support for concurrently downsizing the public sector and deregulating state involvement in the operations of the economy. This has resulted in either the outsourcing or the privatisation of government departments and enterprises. In the training sector this has led to the commercialisation and corporatisation of TAFE operations and the development of a competitive training market.

The impact of the tendencies in the education and training sector has meant that there is a need for training to:

- Be more frequent and utilise new technologies and new sites
- Reflect changes occurring in industry and the workplace.
- Incorporate the new literacies arising from computer technology and workplace reform.
- Incorporate the diverse views of culture knowledge and practice as Australia participates in new global markets.

Four policy 'epochs' in vocational education and training

There are several policy epochs which identify significant watersheds in the development of both vocational education and training as well as literacy and numeracy policy in Australia. In each policy epoch, the relationship among the state, industry and workplace training has changed profoundly under the influence of differing policy settings. In a similar way the notion of literacy, its role and relationship to the workplace have also undergone redefinition and changes. In each of these periods the work of teachers has also been subject to significant changes.

The Poor Cousin epoch: Technical education and the emergence of TAFE 1900-1974

The training sector has been viewed as the poor cousin in relation to the schools and higher education sector. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of the Technical education system in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. The courses and programs were designed to prepare working men in the trades through the apprenticeship system. The courses were linked to industrial awards where skill levels determined wages and allowances within the structure of the centrally established industrial courts. Apprenticeships were time served and structured around the provisions of industrial awards. Technical Colleges retained a specific working class character where there was strict demarcation between 'practical' manual skills and the academic and mental skills attached to literacy. Reading and writing were viewed as means of 'improvement' but of little relevance to the practical everyday activities of trades. The provision of language and literacy classes was not seen as the role of Technical Colleges but that of the schooling sector and by the second world war major problems were identified in relation to the literacy levels of Australian men being recruited into the armed services.

Major reform did not occur until the 1970s with the arrival of the Whitlam government.

The Kangan epoch: participation and equity 1974-1988

The fragmented administration, the narrow focus and exclusively masculinised nature of technical training centred on industrial production were challenged by the Whitlam government with the establishment of the Kangan Committee in 1974. Aside from increasing funding by 258% to the newly created Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system, Kangan recommended a greater emphasis on the participation and access of groups and activities excluded from the former Technical system. The Kangan report proposed an expansion into general education, which included literacy, and the inclusion of programs to meet the particular needs of women, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and students of non-English speaking background.

These initiatives, aimed at increasing the access of targeted groups, ensured that the profile of literacy services was lifted. In this era, literacy services in many states were allocated a special unit status. Many of these units utilised professional staff and voluntary tutors who worked with individual students on a withdrawal basis.

As apprenticeship opportunities collapsed in the mid 1980s and traineeships were established in the wake of the 1985 Kirby Labour Market Programs report, literacy services became a regular program option in both traineeship programs and an increasing number of youth employment programs or equity initiatives such as the Participation and Equity Program (PEP).

Up to the late 1980s the majority of adult literacy services was provided by TAFE in institutional classroom settings by specialist teachers or trained volunteers.

The epoch of the Open Training Market and seamless web 1988-1992

The policy settings of the 1980s positioned literacy and numeracy skills within microeconomic reform and the emergence of team oriented workplaces where the need for effective communications skills was escalating.

As Australian manufacturing collapsed in the face of international competition in the mid 1980s and the levels of apprenticeships dipped, the TAFE system was criticised by industry and government as being poorly prepared for award and industry restructuring. TAFE was identified by successive governments as being inflexible to industry and commercial needs. Following the Deveson Report of the *Training Costs of Award Restructuring Committee*, in 1991 and the National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET) report entitled *TAFE in the 1990s*, the policy direction has emphasised a deregulation of provision and the creation of an Open Training Market.

The Open Training Market involved the provision of training by a mix of private and public providers with the objective of integrating training more coherently with the needs of industry. In terms of the structure of the VET systems, this represented a departure from the previous monopoly held by TAFE and reserved a crucial position for private providers in training.

The agenda for change proposed significant and profound changes to the structural linkages between the education and training sectors and the needs of Australian industry and commerce. In this context literacy and language based skills were linked to employment productivity and competencies established by industry itself.

In this policy phase, literacy and numeracy provision shifted from a marginalised and peripheral activity outside the VET training system into mainstream industrial training frameworks. Accompanying this was a move away from learning models which isolated literacy as a 'reading' activity to the demonstration of communications competence in varied workplace settings. This tendency was accelerated with the emergence of competency based training in the late 1980s.

Concurrent with the changes in policy developments, the structures for the recognition and accreditation of training programs were reformed with the introduction of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which allowed for greater portability of qualifications. The AQF has been represented as facilitating a 'seamless web' of course accreditation across the education and training sectors which eroded the boundaries between skills and education and repositioned literacy. The emphasis on time served apprenticeships and courses was replaced with competency based training and the attainment of competencies. Competency based training is a continuing development which has specific importance for language and literacy teachers because competency based training is highly text based.

Critics of the previous training system argued that time served training did not focus on outcomes which were relevant to current industrial practice. A series of government reports stressed the need for a more performance related training system with a clear description of competencies and levels of performance expected from any job. In 1991 the Mayer Committee, assigned the task of designing key educational competencies, described them as:

> 'Each area will consist of applications of knowledge and skills in the workplace context. Each application will be referred to as a *competency* accompanied by a set of *criteria* for judging achievement of competency. Within each area, competencies will be arranged in order of difficulty within *strands*. This will enable the identification of a range of *performance standards*, each consisting of a group of competencies of a similar order of difficulty. The resulting matrix will be called a *key competency structure*'
>
> (Mayer, E., 1992 *Employment Related Key Competencies for Post Compulsory Education and Training*, p3).

Put simply, each job would have a series of specific competencies which would be the basis of any training program. The acquisition of these vocational competencies would be evident through the ability to

demonstrate the performance of the cluster of competencies. In this way, competencies are the attributes and skills which describe how a job should be done to ensure quality services and products.

Competencies are established and incorporated in occupational training through the Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) which consist of a variety of industry representatives from business, industry, unions and other stakeholders. They operate at a national and state level and in some industries such as the metals and tourism industries have developed or contracted the development of national training modules using CBT. Competencies are also graded according to levels of performance and this represents an increasing hierarchy of skill complexity.

Policy makers have argued that it is critical that the competencies reflect the contemporary skill requirements of industry and workers. Training programs must then provide workplace mobility to enable participants in training to advance through not only the relevant performance levels but also to be able to use prior learning to gain accreditation for further education. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means that participants could have previous work and industrial experience recognised as an educational experience and as a prerequisite for entry to a more advanced level of training.

It is perhaps most important for teachers to understand that literacy and language course development and outcomes will be significantly influenced by the relevant skills frameworks mandated in occupations.

Criticisms of competency based training

CBT has not come without its critics and this is important for teachers to understand. Some critics view CBT as unnecessarily reductionist which means there is a tendency to break skills in occupations down into meaningless units. There is also a general concern that CBT presents artificial and static views of skills. How can we account for the 'shelf life' of skills? Does CBT favour practical skills? How are abstract and conceptual qualities to be developed in CBT? Are work skills separate from knowledge and understanding? How are skills to be represented in

communal and collective workplaces and contexts? Competency based training presents a limited view of skills which suggests they are individualised accessories that workers need in the workplace and the labour market. CBT has been heavily influenced by manufacturing trades and carries with it the culture and knowledge assumptions of those industries which have a masculinised and technical view of tasks. How will CBT develop to describe work in the service and community industries where new job growth is? Will CBT work in these emergent and changing occupations? These are all important questions.

A critical issue for teachers with the move towards self-accessed modules is the concern that CBT is not only text based but has cultural and gender biases. The notion of skills in CBT is individualistic and monocultural, failing to look at collective and community contexts for skills valued by Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander communities. Additionally, there is a danger that the skills which women and ethnic communities bring to the workplace are omitted when a masculinised view of 'practical' skills is applied. This creates great difficulties for teachers working in the multicultural community of Australia because the cultural inappropriateness of CBT materials contradicts the intended accessibility that promoters of CBT argue is its chief advantage.

In many ways the arguments regarding skill acquisition in the context of CBT are similar to those which typify theories associated with language and literacy acquisition. As theories of literacy have opposing views between those who view the achievement of literacy as a threshold and those who view literacy as a differential achievement of a complex range of tasks in diverse domains, a similar argument exists in skills development. Challenges exist in relation to the need to develop a broad matrix to represent skills rather than unidimensional and narrow demarcations between incompetent and competent.

The epoch of 'User Choice' 1992-1998

The changes promoting the development of the Open Training Market have been reinforced with the establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1992 and the implementation of 'user choice' by the Howard government in 1996.

ANTA's objective was the unification and integration of the fragmented state based training systems into a national VET system. One of the achievements of ANTA has been the development of national strategies to address the literacy needs of an estimated 2.6m Australians who do not have sufficient literacy skills to participate in the community and the workforce. *Towards a Skilled Australia: A National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training* also proposed the integration of literacy into vocational programs to meet the needs of under represented groups such as women, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and non-English speaking background students (ANTA 1994 p 23). The establishment of ANTA was also accompanied by the emergence of a competitive training market consisting of a mix of public and private providers. The *One Nation* statement in 1992 founding ANTA, committed $720m growth funds to be allocated on the basis of competitive tendering. From 1992 a growing proportion of funds previously allocated to the public provider was placed on the Open Training Market. This open tendering had the dual effect of facilitating the emergence of private providers and reducing the funds directly allocated to TAFE. These changes ensured that there would be an increasing number of private providers. In 1993 the number of private providers in all states was 782. In 1997 there were over 900 private providers in Queensland alone.

The acceleration of 'user choice' has been the fundamental mechanism for distributing training funds by the Howard government. 'User choice' ensures that public funds will flow to individual training providers to reflect the choice of the client, in this case industry and employers, in selecting a preferred training provider. Under the umbrella of 'user choice' employers are now able to select their preferred provider, the mode of delivery, the location and the means of assessment. In this context there has been a dramatic shift towards enterprise based training

and on-site instruction. Traditional methods of institutional classroom based teaching are changing in response to 'user choice' and are being replaced by training methods such as mentoring, coaching and the use of workplace assessors at the enterprise level.

The implementation of 'user choice' and the deregulation of the VET system are possible through the development of the 'National Training Framework'. This consists of two interconnecting components: Training Packages and the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF). The Training Packages provide for a series of endorsed and non-endorsed components. The endorsed components are limited to industry standards, assessment guidelines and qualifications. The non-endorsed components include learning strategies (curriculum, teaching and learning), professional development materials and assessment materials.

Consistent with the shift to integrating literacy in VET frameworks, literacy and numeracy skills are explicitly addressed within the competency standards in the Training Packages.

The Training Packages are preproduced and prepackaged national training guides to meet industry competency standards that will be available to any registered training/assessment organisation at one stop training centres. Specific literacy qualifications are not required to use the Training Packages.

These reforms to the training system have reshaped and redefined the nature and scope of teachers' work. Teachers' work is now resituated within on-site and enterprise settings. Teachers are required to have an active role in brokering and negotiating the training arrangements with training clients. A direct relationship with students is now mediated by employers who have significant power in determining the nature and character of training.

Training Packages have also reshaped the teachers' relationship to curriculum with the role of teachers arguably being nothing more than a delivery agent. The 'teacher free' concept of learning is reinforced with the introduction of workplace assessors, workplace mentors and industry trainers. Teachers' work in the context of these changes is moving away from direct provision to facilitating and negotiating the events.

frameworks and process of learning that are conducted by others. In addition the growth of the competitive training market means that teachers will be increasingly involved in sourcing funding in both private and public agencies that employ them. The work of teachers has moved away from traditional face to face classroom models to broader notions of a learning co-ordinator.

After ten years of profound reform the VET system had moved from the periphery of education policy into the centre of industrial and economic policy with a national focus. The fundamental characteristics of the Australian system can be summarised as:

- The establishment of the training industry and the emergence of a mix of private and public providers of training in the context of a competitive training market (Deveson, 1990).
- The distribution of training funds on a competitive basis to a mix of providers (Deveson, 1990; ANTA, 1994).
- The introduction of industry based competencies as the foundation for curriculum development and linkages of all programs within the Australian Qualifications Framework (ESFC, 1992; AEC, 1991; Mayer, 1992; ACC, 1996).
- An emphasis on transferring the location of vocational training to on-the-job and on-site delivery and away from institutional based learning.
- The introduction of 'user choice', where employers select the preferred provider of their choice, as the prime principle for distributing funding.
- The introduction of industry wide Training Packages linking National Competency Standards, Assessment Guidelines and National Qualifications as the primary training curriculum package.

A decade of reform in English language and literacy

The fusion between VET and Literacy provision was reinforced by a succession of policy documents and working parties from the mid 1980s. The progressive movement of literacy and language away from the periphery of educational policy was first made with the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) in 1991.

The ALLP was a landmark policy which recognised the diversity of linguistic and cultural heritage in the Australian community and connected this institutionally to the provision of educational services, information services and training policy. The ALLP recognised the fundamental importance of proficiency in English to the effective participation in all aspects of leisure, work, education and training. It also recognised the importance of languages other than English (LOTE) in the Australian community and the need for support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Languages.

Most importantly the ALLP recognised that there needed to be an integrated national framework of equitable access to language and literacy services for those estimated 700,000 Australians of non-English speaking background and those with low levels of literacy. The ALLP stated that no Australian should be denied medical services and that the same standard should apply to language and literacy services. The ALLP linked this policy objective with the need to maintain innovative employment, work and training practices by emphasising significant funding for workplace and vocational training. The ALLP estimated that efficiencies from improved literacy levels have the potential gain to the economy of $3.2 billion annually.

The first national policy instrument for the implementation of the ALLP was established with the development the National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy (NCAELLS) in 1993. One of the objectives of NCAELLS was the expansion and diversification of efforts to integrate language and literacy in vocational education. This included strategies to integrate language and literacy into competencies

and develop appropriate articulation and pathways for students involved in language and literacy programs. The NCAELLS also identified the need to train specialists in writing integrated curriculum.

The importance of literacy in the context of communication skills needed for obtaining employment was affirmed in the Finn report that stated:

> Language and Communication skills, and more specifically, literacy skills are of fundamental importance to all aspects of life including education, training and employment. (AEC 1991 p 71)

The momentum for the integration of English language and literacy skills in vocational education was reinforced by the National Board of Employment Education and Training in a major report published in 1993. In *Incorporating English Language and Literacy Competencies into Industry standards*, NBEET identified the need to equip workers with communication strategies to meet the needs of industry restructuring and the urgency of developing models that integrate English language and literacy with industry competency standards.

The identification of literacy and numeracy competencies that are essential for work and the development of the characteristics of integrated programs was conducted by Courtney and Mawer (1995). In *Integrating English Language Literacy and Numeracy into Vocational and Training: A Framework* the authors proposed a number of principles and strategies as well identifying models involving integration. The authors importantly identified the need to recognise:

- That literacy was a social process.
- That students had diverse backgrounds that needed to be recognised in programs.
- That learners brought skills and experiences to program settings and this needed to be incorporated in programs.
- That programs should be consistent with the literacy and numeracy requirements of the job or vocational area.
- That integrated models have significant efficiency and productivity outcomes.

One of the most significant initiatives which demonstrates and models the linkages of literacy and numeracy with workplace and industry reform is the Workplace English, Language and Literacy Program (WELL). Since commencing in 1991 over 65,000 workers have participated in WELL training programs. Under the WELL program the Commonwealth government provides funding to industry or training providers to conduct workplace related literacy programs. The training, which also requires an employer contribution, has included:

- Improved workers access to skills and training development.
- Improved workplace communication.
- Improved occupational health and safety in the workplace.
- Improved workers' job security and career prospects.
- Contribution to enterprise level productivity.

Over 1,000 enterprises have utilised WELL funding since it started in 1991.

One of the major issues and controversies associated with the moves towards integration has been the question of how to merge the demands of competency based training with the diverse needs and cultural backgrounds of literacy students, their training settings and how their achievements should be reported. *The National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence* and the *National Reporting System* are initiatives which addresses these issues.

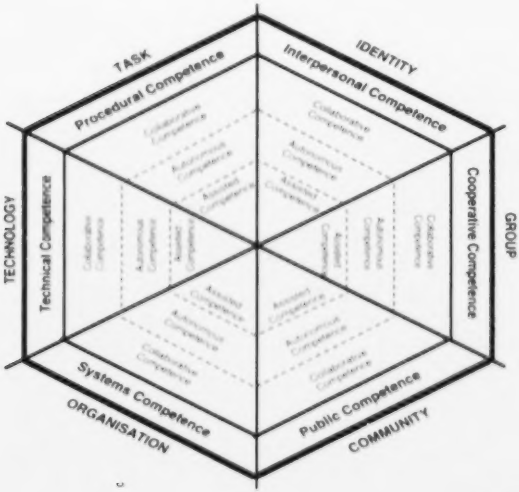
The National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence

Recognising the need to respond to the agenda of change and reform in a proactive manner which addresses the broad social dimensions of literacy, members of the adult education community sought to develop a framework which interpreted literacy skills as social practice. This view of literacy practice challenged the narrow functional and instrumental definitions associated with workplace skills that featured in the rhetoric of training reform. The move was away from unitary constructs of

literacy towards building a matrix of literacy performances. This matrix constructs literacy as a series of social practices which vary according to social contexts and whether people are working with assistance, independently or collaboratively.

The National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence has great value as a document which maps the possible contexts and social practices. The Framework could act as a guide to establishing a coherent practice, competence criteria, standardised terminology and progress indicators which can be adapted to various contexts, sites and needs. Such a document also assists in informing industry of the standards in language and literacy in the language of CBT. The National Framework has defined a skill as comprising aspects, stages, and phases of learning in a mandela matrix.

Figure 1. *The National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence* (Copyright ACTRAC Products)



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The chief advantage of this is the recognition of communication as both an individual and collaborative interaction in personal and systemic settings utilising a variety of different technologies. Importantly the Framework does not seek to impose a series of levels of literacy skills with which to evaluate people. Rather the advantage of the Framework is that it provides guidance on how an individual may use a repetoire of competence over different social situations.

The National Reporting System (NRS)

The wider range of students, programs and settings for the provision of language and literacy services that accompanied their integration with vocational education highlighted the need for a standardised form of reporting to assist stakeholders understand the achievements of students. As the sector become more diversified the need for common understanding and interpretation across stakeholders became essential to facilitate student pathways. The National Reporting System (NRS) incorporated the *National Framework of Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Competence* with the objective of providing a broad tool that spans a broad range of theoretical positions in language, literacy and numeracy. The NRS provides students with a report of their achievement which provides a reference point for industry, enterprise, personnel, employment services providers and curriculum developers. The NRS identifies five levels of competence and six aspects of communication. The six aspects of communication levels broadly conform to the paradigm of literacies established in the *National Framework of Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Competence*. Additional reporting information is represented in the form of indicators of competence, conditions of performance, workplace and social contexts, assessment principles as well as language literacy and numeracy performance strategies.

The National Reporting System has been endorsed as the primary report tool for WELL programs from 1998 and a number of federally funded literacy and numeracy programs. Paradoxically, the NRS promises the practical benefit of a universal instrument applicable in all settings with the difficulty of attempting to map diverse program outcomes against standardised indicators. As an instrument of national policy the adoption

of the NRS has been hampered by the politics of interest and veto at the level of the states and providers. The NRS, as the first national measure of literacy, language and numeracy achievement, is still yet to reach its potential. The possibilities for the NRS will be determined by the extent to which the teacher's role moves from direct provision to program management that includes a new range of functions.

Teachers' work: From technical teacher to VET practitioner

The policy reforms in vocational and adult education have significantly reshaped the dimensions of teachers' work. Teachers are facing the realisation that successful participation in the competitive training environment is dependent on a repertoire of skills quite different from those associated with traditional roles of teaching. There is a range of new roles that emerge from participating in competitive training markets which includes the development of a client focus as well as marketing, budgeting, liaison, networking and the development of new skills in the delivery of flexible customised learning materials.

A new range of skills is incorporated in establishing a training program at enterprise level that requires careful negotiation with management and workers. Industry and legislative requirements are overlaid with a careful needs analysis of the business. Workers are interviewed and a needs analysis completed. Program proposals are drawn up and costs negotiated while funding sources are sought to support the training of staff in an often reluctant business. From that point, comes customisation of curriculum and timetabling to meet business timetables. All this is done with the eyes of enterprises focussed firmly on the productivity agenda while the teacher attempts to reframe the short term goals of business within long term gains of training. Teachers are now required to steer programs through the politics of workplaces, ensuring the interests of stakeholders are met.

The relevance of traditional roles of technical teaching which emerged in earlier epochs are of questionable value in the context of advancing technology in the workplace and the development of the new learning environments. Recognising the dynamic external environment, Lepani (1995 & 1996) has proposed an expanded view of a teacher's role to incorporate a broader range of activities in what is termed the VET practitioner.

The VET practitioner's role incorporates:

- Specialist learning facilitator;
- Knowledge management strategist;
- Consultant to enterprises and industry;
- Designer of multimedia learning products and services;
- Developer of strategic partnerships;
- Researcher;
- Business manager;
- Communications strategist;
- Career pathing strategist; and
- Assessment and credentialling specialist.

According to Lepani, the VET practitioner will also be working in the context of a corporate structure emphasising self managing teams in organisations characterised by flatter management structures. In these new devolved and performance oriented work structures, Lepani has argued that teachers will be repositioned as managers and facilitators of learning in the context of a competitive and dynamic learning environment. This new environment will be typified by learning and teaching strategies which incorporate mixed mode and multimedia delivery that are customised to meet the needs of specific clients.

There is now a significant contradiction in the positioning of teachers' work which operates at two levels.

At one level the policy agendas associated with 'user choice' have the potential to contribute to 'teacher free' learning environment typified by the 'deprofessionalisation' of teachers' work. Training packages are in effect context free packages that are free of teacher input and shaped without responding to the needs of learners. In this scenario the ability of learners and teachers to secure control over the direction of their learning is limited.

At another level the integration of language and literacy within

industrial frameworks and the use of new technologies of learning that require specialist knowledge, place teachers in a particularly influential situation. The identified lack of a training culture in industry assigns teachers a particularly powerful role in negotiating and determining the nature and shape of the learning experience.

The success of this advisory role is almost entirely dependent on the clarity with which teachers understand their new roles and are able to convert this to practice in a variety of settings. Research conducted by a team (Kell, Balatti, Hill & Muspratt 1997) analysing the impact of the Open Training Market on TAFE teachers' work in Queensland suggests that there is lack of awareness of what the new work practices are. Most of the teachers interviewed understood the need for flexibility but lacked an understanding of how this might translate to actual practice in job design. The research suggested that teachers lacked an understanding of the operating principles and exemplars of leading practice in the new environment. Staff interviewed found it hard to visualise what their work might look like, but more alarmingly lacked a theoretical framework for adult teaching and learning that linked with the flexible delivery. This research highlighted the urgent need for an awareness of the theoretical frameworks of adult learning that adopts a learner centred approach to integrate with the diverse needs of participants and clients in the varied settings associated with flexible delivery.

Clearly there needs to be accessible, system-wide professional development that provides guidance to teachers on both the theoretical and practical challenges which emerge from flexible delivery and 'user choice'. The task is made more difficult by the declining infrastructure and resources devoted to professional development since the late 1980s. The ambitious intentions of the reform process will not eventuate without adequate levels of professional development that provides teachers with the theories, techniques, skills and capacities needed to fulfil the additional roles of the VET practitioner. Professional development will need to provide the guidance for teachers to ensure that professional standards are maintained and that the interests of students are not sacrificed by a reductionist minimalist view of training.

The policy settings that have merged language, literacy and numeracy with vocational education and training have the potential to provide

participants with practical and involving learning experiences. The future VET practitioner has the policy platform to facilitate a reflective and critical focus in Australian workplaces. Rather than feature a narrow functionalist agenda, the commitment of the VET agenda to access and participation has the potential to create significant social, economic and political changes through literacy and numeracy services. These profound changes have now enabled literacy and numeracy provision and training to move from the still waters of the billabong to the swiftly moving waters of the mainstream.

Special thanks are extended to Angela Hill for resources, assistance and suggestions in the preparation of this booklet.

A TIME LINE OF SIGNIFICANT POLICY SOURCES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH LITERACY POLICY

YEAR & AUTHOR	TITLE	SIGNIFICANCE	SOCIAL BACKGROUND
1974, Kangan, M., chair Australian Committee on TAFE	*TAFE in Australia*	• Established TAFE, • Increased federal involvement. • identified access and equity as critical issue associated with literacy. • Skills formation as individual 'lifelong' activity.	• Whitlam government moves to increase spending in social and education areas. • Moves to address inequalities in Australian community through government intervention.
1987, Lo Bianco, J.	*National Policy on Languages*	• Established English as principal language. • Recognition of access to language services. • Recognised Community Languages and need for LOTE in curriculum, ATSI languages. • Merging of ELLN in workplace education.	• Community recognition of multiculturalism emerges. • Emerging pride in linguistic and national heritages as era of assimilationist policies closes.

YEAR & AUTHOR	TITLE	SIGNIFICANCE	SOCIAL BACKGROUND
1987, Dawkins,J.,& Holding ,C.	*Skills Formation in Australia: 1987-88 budget papers.*	• Skills formation as meeting national economic targets. • Argued for emphasis on workplace training. • Linked training to improvement in economic performance. • Mainstreaming approach to literacy advocated .	• 'Banana Republic' statement by Treasurer Paul Keating. • Australian terms of trade and current account in deficit
1990, Deveson, I., chair Training Cost Review Committee (TCRC)	*Training Costs of Award Restructuring*	• Identified open training market. • Wider range of provision of private training needed. • Skills formation linked to improved economic performance. • Literacy constructed as employment skill.	• Manufacturing industries identifed as lacking competitiveness. • Australian workplaces viewed as hierarchical and combative. • Moves towards introducing best practice in Australian workplaces.
1991, Dawkins, J.	*Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP)*	• Structural arrangements from 1987 paper. • Arrangements between ALLP and other ELLN policies e.g vocationally oriented.	• Late 1980s and early 1990s tyified by national policies to reform aspects of adult education and to reform industry related training .

1991, Finn, B., Chair Australian Education Council (AEC)	*Young People's Participation in Post Compulsory Education*	• Adult Education and Literacy programs and WELL. • Recommended merging general and vocational education. • Set target for vocational education to year 2000. • Identified need for CBT.	• High levels of youth unemployment lead to criticism of school curriculum not providing employment related skills.
1991, National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET)	*TAFE in the 1990's: Developing Australia's Skills*	• Recommended multiple pathways for post compulsory education. • Emphasised greater liaison with industry • Emphasised need for customer oriented approach. • Featured need to change from institutional time served courses to CBT and flexible workplace delivery. • Emphasised literacy as mainstream activity in enterprise and workplace training.	• State functions identified in political arena as being inefficient. • Political culture promotes support for public bureaucracies being corporatised and operating in manner of private sector.

YEAR & AUTHOR	TITLE	SIGNIFICANCE	SOCIAL BACKGROUND
1992, Keating, P.J.	*One Nation*	• Proposed national system of VET and provided framework establishment of ANTA • Commitment of $720m to VET.	• VET sector identified as being the last education sector requiring reform. • Reforms linked to providing national response to training
1992, Mayer, E., with committee	*Employment Related Key Competencies for Post Compulsory Education and Training*	• Identified 8 key Competencies. • Formulated performance levels. • Developed curriculum profiling. • Applied competencies to school curriculum.	• Unemployment levels remain high for young people and disadvantaged groups. • Continued criticism of schools in preparing young people for work.
1992, Carmichael, L., (chair) Employment and Skills Formation Council (ESFC)	*The Australian Vocational Certificate Training Scheme (AVCTS).*	• Described alternative pathways for post compulsory years. • Related school/TAFE to AQF & CBT. • Merged institutional VET with industry.	• Apprenticeship levels on continued decline since 1960. • Low apprentice numbers viewed as threatening entry level skills development.

1993, Australian Literacy Information Office	***National Collaborative English Language and Literacy Strategy (NCAELLS).***	• **Set national directions.** • **Diversified resourse base and expanded level of services.** • **Proposed integration of ELLN in VET** • **Proposed articulation of ELLN programs into VET** • **Proposed training of literacy specialists to write ELLN into VET curriculum.**	• **Deficiencies in literacy and communication skills become identified as problems in the workforce requiring national response.** • **Debates on literacy involve polarisation between 'back to basics' movement and groups viewing need for broader notion of literacy.**
1993, National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET)	*Incorporating English Language and Literacy Competencies in Industry Standards*	• Recommended piloting a study into integrating ELLN in VET. • Recommended study into models of integrating ELLN in VET	
1993, Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC)	*National Framework Of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*	• Guide to development of English language and literacy. Framework provides a range of competence descriptors to be used in VET and adult education. • Development of referral matrix to establish competence. • Establishes competence in group, community and systemic competence.	• Notions of literacy associated with reading now challenged by literacies associated with new technologies and global communications

YEAR & AUTHOR	TITLE	SIGNIFICANCE	SOCIAL BACKGROUND
1993, Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC)	*National Framework Of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence: Application to Adult Basic Education Curriculum Development.*	• Explanation of Framework and its application. • Document provides linkage from National Framework to Curriculum development. • Documentation of simulated examples of using the National Framework.	• Significant debate on appropriateness of CBT in all cultural settings and contexts.
1994, Keating , P.J.	*Working Nation*	• Guaranteed training places for unemployed. • Establishment of individual case management with individual training programs.	• Criticism of employment programs as being 'mickey mouse' and contributing to the 'recycling ' of the unemployed
1994, Australian National Training Authority	*Towards A Skilled Australia: A National Strategy for Vocational Education & Training*	• Developed national strategy which is flexible, responsive, client aware and competitive. • Identified target groups in context of social justice. • Identified ELLN as mainstream VET activity.	• Continued process of reforms to VET system to develop co-ordinated national response.

1995, Courtney, M., & Mawer, G.	*Integrating English Language, Literacy and Numeracy into Vocational Education and Training*	• Identified models, strategies and principles for integrating ELLN in VET. • Proposed ELLN needs to be consistent with needs of job and competencies. • ELLN should relate to accredited pathways.	• Employment programs and VET funding shifts to subsidisation of employers for work site programs rather than funding trainees.
1996, Coates, S, Fitzpatrick, L., Mc Kenna, A., Makin, A.	*National Reporting System*	• Reporting system to provide consistent framework for reporting incorporating student achievements, program providers, funding authorities and industry and training personnel. • Consists of six Aspects of Communication and five Levels of Competency.	• Federal education policy emphasises establishment of national benchmarks and standards in schools and VET.
1997, Fitzpatrick, L., & Roberts, A.	*Workplace Communication in National Training Packages: A Practical Guide*	• Specified ELLN competencies must be explicit in Training Packages. • Illustrated strategies for applying ELLN in Endorsed and Non Endorsed components of Training Packages	• Workplace and training legislation stress deregulated training system based at enterprise level.

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The publication of the Research into Practice Series is one strategy to implement the dissemination of research. The aim is to provide a series of booklets on different aspects of adult literacy in order to:

- *establish a knowledge base regarding adult literacy practice and research*
- *raise awareness about adult literacy*
- *bring research and practice together*

The authors of the booklets, who are recognised experts in their field, were invited to write for an audience of literacy practitioners in the community, TAFE, university, ACTU, industry and private providers. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Language Australia.

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